

COUNCIL: 24 OCTOBER 2019

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & SKILLS STATEMENT

Cardiff 2030

Building on progress that has been made towards Cardiff 2020, a new 10-year vision for Education in Cardiff, entitled '*Cardiff 2030 – A ten year vision for a Capital City of Learning & Opportunity*', was approved by the Cabinet on 10th October 2019 and will be launched at an event to be held at City Hall on 19th November 2019.

Cardiff 2030 sets out an ambitious vision, underpinned by two themes, five goals and priority commitments. City-wide partnership and children's rights are key to the approach, recognising that 'Education is Everybody's Business' and that Cardiff is aspiring to be a UNICEF Child Friendly City. The cross-cutting themes of the vision are:

- A shared responsibility for education and learning across the city;
- Meaningful participation of children and young people.

The 5 goals are:

- A Learning Entitlement;
- Learners' health and wellbeing;
- Realising the Curriculum for Wales 2022 in Cardiff;
- A world class education workforce;
- High quality learning environments.

Changes to Assessment and Publication Data

There have been significant changes in the assessment and reporting arrangements for schools and pupils performance in Wales this year, aligned with the national reform programme, the proposed new Curriculum for Wales and the removal of high stakes threshold measures. These changes have a significant impact on what can be published at a local authority and national level.

Following consultation in 2018, the Welsh Government amended regulations so that teacher assessment and Welsh National Test data below the national level could no longer be published. Schools, governing bodies and local authorities continue to have access to their own data allowing appropriate self-evaluation to take place, but the data is not published or used for school accountability below a national level. This impacts on reporting across the Foundation Phase through to the end of Key Stage 3.

At Key Stage 4, previous threshold measures are no longer published, including the L2+ threshold (pupils gaining 5 A*-C at GCSE Level including an English and Maths measure). This is replaced by a capped 9 measure, including a best literacy, best numeracy, best science and 6 other subjects, together with a skills challenge certificate measure. With these new measures, there are no comparisons to be made with previous data.

The Welsh Government has stated that it is counterproductive for schools to be placed under disproportionate pressure based on individual measures and that evaluating the performance of individual schools will be more helpful to supporting and challenging these schools. There will be a need to continue the development of a wide range of other measures to support school improvement journeys.

Whilst the move away from high stakes, narrow accountability is to be broadly welcomed, the challenge is to ensure that school level data is used effectively by local authorities, regional consortia and schools to ensure that all learners achieve their potential.

Unicef Child Friendly Cities Summit

I joined young people from Cardiff's Child Friendly City Advisory Board at a Unicef global summit that was held in Cologne, Germany from 15-17 October 2019. The summit brought together mayors, city leaders, technical experts, children and young people from Child Friendly Cities around the world to debate and enhance strategies to build sustainable child friendly cities, discuss innovative approaches to advancing child rights and share good practice. I also participated in a panel discussion at the summit on the subject of a child rights-based approach to public services, alongside representatives from Newcastle (UK), New York (USA), Helsinki (Finland) and Baro (Guinea). The summit provided a unique opportunity for mayors and city leaders from around the world to recommit to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 30 years since its adoption.

Rights Respecting Schools

I was pleased to receive a letter recently from Frances Bestley, Unicef Programme Director, congratulating Cardiff Council on its impressive work in the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) programme. We now have 86 Cardiff schools active in the programme, which embeds children's rights across the curriculum and throughout the whole school community. So far, 33 schools have achieved bronze status and 9 schools have been awarded silver status. Evidence shows that schools guided by the RRSA values framework have children feeling safer in school and happier in themselves, with 93% of head teachers in Gold schools reporting a noticeable reduction in exclusions and bullying and 80% of children at Gold schools feeling listened to.

Over 100 Cardiff teachers have received training from Unicef and, together, young people and the school community learn about children's rights and ways to put them into practice every day. Just this month, 25 schools received training from Unicef with additional training planned for next month. This, together with a wide range of other work, contributes to our ambition to be a Child Friendly City and make children's rights a reality for all our children and young people.

SEREN Network

It has been another exciting year for SEREN students in Cardiff. SEREN provides pupils with life-changing opportunities that are designed to expand their horizons and develop a lifelong passion for learning. It has made a huge impact on increasing the number of Cardiff school pupils both applying to and receiving offers from Oxbridge Universities and, indeed, starting their degree courses in September after achieving top grades in their A Levels. Many of our SEREN students have also gone on to take up places in some of the UK's other leading universities. One pupil from Fitzalan High School is also on his way, on a full scholarship, to study at Harvard University in the USA as a direct result of the SEREN programme.

The SEREN launch on 23rd October 2019 at Cardiff City Stadium will provide an opportunity for our current Year 12 SEREN students to have a taster of what the SEREN programme will offer them over the next two years. We continue to develop the SEREN Foundation programme for Years 8-11 in partnership with our schools and Welsh Government and to explore opportunities for our students to engage in their academic interests before their GCSEs.

In addition, the SEREN Network residential programme will be taking place at the Storey Arms Centre on 28th-30th October 2019 during the half term holiday period. Two More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils from each Secondary School in Cardiff have been invited to attend this programme, which provides the pupils with opportunities to lead, teach and use teamwork skills. It also enables them to gain confidence with their peers, to overcome challenges and to achieve common objectives. I understand that the Leader of the Council is also planning to attend and speak as part of the programme. This is the second SEREN Network residential programme to take place at the Centre this year. The first programme was held in April 2019 and was a great success, with all participants recognising the benefits of the programme and to their own personal development.

I want to congratulate our schools for the support that they have given SEREN students in Cardiff and to say well done to all the students that achieved great exam results and secured university places this year. We wish them all well in the future and hope that they keep a connection with Cardiff in the future.

School Uniform Donations

Cardiff & Vale and Barry School Uniform Donation was set up last year in response to the rising costs of school uniform. Cardiff Hubs & Libraries have now all become donation points where any spare school uniform items that are no longer needed can be donated and then given to those families who do need it. Additional storage space is also being provided by the Hubs & Libraries service so that the uniforms can be sorted and stored prior to distribution. A large amount of uniforms have been donated through the donation points to date and I'm sure that there is more to come. This is a very positive initiative and one that the Council is very happy to support.

Social Prescribing Courses

In partnership with Public Health Wales, Wales Co-operative Centre and GPs in surgeries in the East of the city, the Adult Learning team ran a Fitbit course at St Mellons Hub. Learners were loaned FitBits and were shown how to use them and other mental health and wellbeing apps to monitor their weight, sleep, health and fitness regime. This course will now be rolled out across Cardiff.

A 2-week 'Get into Child Care' course was also delivered by Adult Learning at Central Library Hub, in partnership with Flying Start and Into Work Advice Services. 10 participants completed the course and have been offered placements with Flying Start working towards Level 2 and Level 3 Childcare qualifications.

Councillor Sarah Merry

Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills

18 October 2019